

Remarks/Arguments:

This is a reply to the office action of April 29.

The elected claims 23 - 39 are currently rejected as anticipated by Harmon, or, in the case of claim 26, as obvious over Harmon in view of Newhouse et al.

Claim 23 has been amended above to better distinguish the invention from the prior art. Claims 24, 25 and 28 are canceled. Claim 27 now contains limitations previously in claim 28. Claim 38 has been rewritten to depend from claim 23.

This invention has features designed to improve both (a) the strength of the mechanical connection between a relatively hard insert and each layer of a two-layer container, and (b) fluid sealing at the interfaces between the insert and those layers. The insert is internally threaded, and has an annular wall provided with a series of external annular projections (“gripping elements”). These interlock with the internal surface of a neck portion formed on the inner layer (“coating”) material. The insert also has a collar which extends radially outward from the annular wall, and it has an annular groove which interlocks with the outer layer (“covering”). To prevent leakage, should fluid seep along the interlocking interface between the insert and the coating layer, a sealing ring is seated in an annular groove (“indentation”), bearing against the top of the coating neck.

Amended claim 23 recites that a portion of the covering envelops the collar. This limitation is supported at paragraph 56 of the description as originally filed, which states that the bundle of fibers (42; making the outside covering 40) is wrapped several times tightly around the collar 14, making up a portion of the covering. Thus, a portion of covering is wrapped around the collar, enveloping it.

Neither reference cited by the Examiner discloses a tank reinforcing insert having a collar which projects radially beyond the annular wall of the insert, whereby a portion of the outer covering holds the collar in contact with a neck of the coating, and wherein the insert has gripping elements suitable for making a mechanical connection with the coating, the gripping elements comprising annular projections extending radially from said annular wall.

Neither reference discloses a tank wherein the insert comprises gripping elements suitable for making notches for connection with said coating, said gripping elements comprising annular projections extending radially from said annular wall.

Besides strengthening the connection between the insert and the coating, in the claimed solution the outside covering also participates in preventing fluid leakage from the tank along the interface between the insert and the other parts.

For the above reasons, the subject matter of the amended claim 23 is deemed non-obvious over the references, in combination with common general knowledge.

The dependent claims are deemed patentable not only because they depend from a patentable amended claim 23; but also because they contain additional features not suggested by the prior art.

In particular, claim 26 recites that “the collar presents at least one annular indentation, which is penetrated by at least one piece of the portion of covering.” The annular indentation is element 28 in Fig. 2. The prior art does not provide positive interlocking of this type between the insert and the *outer* covering.

We believe the claims now presented are patentable over the prior art of record, and that this application is now in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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